



February 15, 2023

Hon. Representative Kavros DeGraw  
Hon. Senator Rahman  
Hon. Members of Planning and Development Committee

**Re: Senate Bill No. 1002; An Act Extending The Deadline For Zoning Enforcement Officer Certification.**

Dear Chairs and members of Planning and Development Committee:

The Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officials (CAZEO) was founded in 1979 as the professional organization representing individuals employed as Zoning Enforcement Officers throughout the State of Connecticut. Currently, CAZEO has over 225 members which represent over 140 communities throughout Connecticut.

On behalf of CAZEO, we are writing to you to express our concerns with the provisions raised by **Senate Bill 1002**.

As an organization, our primary focus is to provide professional development opportunities for those working within the area of land use and zoning enforcement. We do this for existing members by providing regular access to in-person and virtual training opportunities, access to resources and working with other professional organizations including the CT Chapter of the American Planning Association, the CT Bar Association and the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA).

For new members, those aspiring to increase their professional responsibility, further their career or gain access to specialized on-the-job training, CAZEO has developed its Certification Institute. This program provides attendees with an opportunity to learn from subject matter experts in areas such as; plan reading, ethics, enforcement policy and procedures, “dealing with difficult people”, statutory requirements and zoning best practices, all with the sole purpose of providing attendees with the basic foundation and skillset required to be successful as a zoning enforcement officer or land use official, regardless of their background, level of experience or previous education. As you are aware, Public Act 21-29 modified CGS §8-3 (e)(2) to include the following:

“Beginning January 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, each person appointed as a zoning enforcement officer shall obtain certification from the Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officials and maintain such certification for the duration of employment as a zoning enforcement officer.”

It is important to note that this language, as written, does not specifically require that any person **currently** appointed as a ZEO obtain certification by 1-1-23, it requires that any person who is appointed as a ZEO **on or after** 1-1-23 obtain certification. The interpretation of this language was not developed solely by CAZEO and has been further supported by the Office of Legislative Research through the Office of Policy and Management.

Nonetheless, to enable those seeking certification immediately, and to further encourage anyone who wishes to work toward certification has an opportunity to do so in compliance with this language, CAZEO has taken several steps in response to this legislation:

**Implementation of “CZEO Candidate”**

For the 2023 membership year, we have implemented a “CZEO Candidate” membership level to provide those currently working to obtain the necessary experience or attend the Certification Institute an option to indicate their intent to fully certify. Members will be allowed to hold this status for up to three years, during which time they will be considered in active pursuit of their certification, in compliance with 8-3.

**AICP Certified Planner Certification “Fast Track” Program:**

In September of 2021, CAZEO’s Executive Board adopted a one-time certification pathway for AICP Certified Planners that following the passage of PA 21-29 had a need or desire to obtain their Certification. This program allowed professional planners that were able to demonstrate their professional experience and involvement with zoning enforcement and land use issues to take the certification test to certify immediately without the need to attend the Certification Institute- an option which several CT planners availed themselves to.

**Certification Institute Program Frequency:**

Typically, CAZEO sees approximately twenty-five to thirty individuals participate in the Certification Institute. Following the passage of PA 21-29 there was a significant interest from members and non-members to obtain their Certification. To accommodate those interested, CAZEO ran the annual Certification Institute twice within the 2022 calendar year which resulted in approximately ninety-five professionals completing the certification program.

CAZEO, for all if its nearly fifty years of existence has been an organization run exclusively by volunteers. The work CAZEO has done through these decades has not been because of any statutory obligations, but because members felt it was an important part of this profession. The current members of the Executive Board and Certification Committee have put in considerable effort to ensure any person who sought to obtain or being working toward certification in response to this 2021 legislative change had the opportunity to do so.

In closing, CAZEO asks that members of Planning and Development please consider the points above and that you **oppose** Senate Bill 1002. It is our position that CAZEO has taken all of the necessary steps to ensure those seeking certification are able to obtain it and that simply extending the timeframe from 2023 to 2024 will only further delay any person not currently pursuing such certification from obtaining access to vital resources, training and support so that they may be successful in their work to support all of Connecticut’s 169 Municipalities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



**Michael Glidden, CZEO CFM**  
President /Legislative Liaison  
CAZEO



**Michael D'Amato, AICP, CZEO**  
Vice President  
CAZEO